AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph beginning on line 17 of page 1 and ending on line 2 of page 2 as follows:

The local switching network 100 shown in Figure 1 may employ one of many different communication protocols enabling data communication between one or more end devices 110-120 via line cards ~~106~~ **104** through 108 and switching fabric 102. Figure 1 will be described with reference to a communications protocol in which end devices communicate by transferring variable sized data frames with headers including source and destination information. Communication between end devices 110-120 can occur via a stream of such variable frames transmitted therebetween.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on line 22 of page 2 and ending on line 2 of page 3 as follows:

The local switching network 100 of Figure 1 shows a single data link between each line card 104-~~106~~ **108** and switching fabric 102. Additional data links may be added between a line card and switching fabric 102. For example, Figure 3 shows a local switching network 300 in block diagram form including three line cards 302-306 coupled to switching fabric 308 via data links 310-318. Although not shown, each line card shown in Figure 3 includes one or more end device ports embodied and one or more interface and local switches.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on line 3 of page 3 and ending on line 10 of page 3 as follows:

In Figure 3, data links 310-318 are coupled to data ports of entry/exit 320- 328 (data ports of entry/exit may be referred to as points of entry/exit, it being understood that data ports and data points are used interchangeably), respectively, of switching fabric 308. Line card 302 is coupled to switching fabric 308 via a pair of data links 310 and 312, line card 304 is coupled to switching fabric 308 via a pair of data links 314 and 316, and ~~Line~~ **line** card 306 is coupled to switching fabric 308 via a single data link 318. Although not shown, each line card 302-306 may be further coupled, directly or indirectly, to one or more end devices such as desktop computers, printers, etc.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on line 1 of page 6 and ending on line 9 of page 6 as follows:

FPOE LUT 406, like RBH generator 404, receives the destination IP address or, as noted above, a port number associated with the destination IP address of the buffer frame, or other header field data. The present invention will be described with FPOE LUT 406 receiving only the destination IP address. The same destination IP address, accordingly, is provided to both the FPOE LUT 406 and the RBH generator 404. In response to receiving the destination IP address, FPOE LUT 406 outputs a stored FPOE to ANDing circuit 410. As will be noted below, ANDing **circuit** 410 bit wise ANDs the received FPOE with one of the mask table 408 masks, the result of which is entered as fabric routing data into a field of the frame.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on line 8 of page 9 and ending on line 24 of page 9 as follows:

One of the buffers 702a or 702b may receive a frame of a flow from a source end device coupled thereto. The frame may be subsequently copied to the other buffer so that buffers 702a and 702b contain identical frames. Alternatively, the frame may be held in an intake buffer and copied into one or both of buffers 702a and 702b simultaneously. Figure 7 shows buffers 702a and 702b with the same frame of a flow contained therein. Local switch 700 adds fabric routing data to one or both of the identical frames in buffers 702a and 702b before one or both are transmitted to fabric 602 and/or 604. Local switch **700** adds routing data to only one of the identical frames in buffers 702a and 702b if **the** frame is part of a unicast or multicast flow that transmits through only one of the two fabrics 602 and 604. A unicast flow defines a flow of frames between two end devices. A multicast flow defines frame flow from a single source end device to multiple end devices. The frame that receives the routing data is transmitted to fabric 602 or 604, and the frame in the other buffer may be subsequently removed or deleted. However, if the received and copied frame is part of a multicast flow transmitted through both fabrics 602 and 604, then local switch 700 adds routing data to each frame in buffer 702a and 702b before both frames are transmitted to fabric 602 and 604, respectively. The routing data added to each of the identical frames may be different.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on line 24 of page 10 and ending on line 2 of page 11 as follows:

The first and second masks in table 706 are distinct multi-bit values. Each mask contained in table 706 includes a pair of concatenated first and second submasks. The first and **second** submasks are associated with data links 614 and 624, respectively. The number of bits in each submask equates to the number of exit ports in fabrics 602 and 604. In the illustrated embodiment, each submask in table 706 has seven bits corresponding, respectively, to the seven ports of exit 634-646. In the illustrated embodiment, the least significant bit of each submask corresponds to port of exit 634, and the most significant bit corresponds to port of exit 646.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on line 12 of page 16 and ending on line 16 of page 16 as follows:

Although the present invention ~~have~~ **has** been described in connection with several embodiments, the invention is not intended to be limited to the specific forms set forth herein, but on the contrary, it is intended to cover such alternatives, modifications, and equivalents as can be reasonably included ~~with in~~ **within** the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.